



MediaJustice 



April 21st, 2025

The Honorable Ash Kalra
Chair, Assembly Judiciary Committee
State Capitol, Room 437
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1303 (Valencia): Communications: Lifeline Telephone Service Program

Assemblymember Kalra,

The Greenlining Institute and the undersigned organizations write in support of AB 1303, the Communications: Lifeline Telephone Service Program Act. This bill ensures that affordable telecommunication services are available to all Californians, including undocumented immigrants, and protects our vulnerable data from federal immigration authorities.

The Greenlining Institute works towards a future where communities of color can build wealth, live in healthy places filled with economic opportunity, and are ready to meet the challenges posed by climate change. At our core, we believe that essential services, such as affordable cell phone coverage, ought to be accessible to all, including our most vulnerable communities.

Today, approximately 1.46 million Californians rely on LifeLine for discounted or free phone service, yet according to the Legislative Analyst's Office, nearly 60% of the households that are eligible remain unenrolled. That's 1.7 million households that *could* benefit, but don't. After the 2025 California wildfires, the consequences of digital exclusion were undeniable: residents without cell service were cut off from emergency alerts, relief services, and the ability to connect with loved ones. Phone access is not a luxury—it is an essential tool for safety, community resilience, and economic recovery. The time to act and expand access to this lifesaving service is now.

One of the most significant barriers to enrolling in Lifeline is the requirement for applicants to register with third-party providers, who often ask applicants to submit Social Security Numbers during the registration process. This practice excludes undocumented families in California, many of whom pay into the LifeLine program, from accessing this service.

This bill affirms California's mission to serve its residents by minimizing the collection and sharing of nonessential applicant information. It also strengthens data protection at a time when federal immigration authorities are targeting our most vulnerable communities. States must be proactive in safeguarding

household information—including addresses, family size, and phone numbers—from misuse or weaponization. Supporting this legislation is a clear statement that California will lead with in prioritizing the privacy of our most vulnerable residents. For these reasons, we state our support for AB 1303.

Sincerely,

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